UNITED NATIONS

Convention to Combat Desertification

Distr.
GENERAL

ICCD/COP(1)/INF.2
26 September 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES
First Session
Rome, 29 September - 10 October 1997

ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF
THE CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS ON PARALLEL EVENTS

The attached information relates to parallel events being planned to coincide with the Conference of the Parties.

1. Parallel Events

A. Mayors' Forum

Date: Friday and Saturday, 3-4 October, commencing 15.00 on 3 October
Venue: Rome, City Hall
Participants: Mayors and local authorities from 20-30 countries; forum is open to all COP participants (as observers only); room for up to 100 people
For information contact:
IFAD: - Mr. Brahmane Mansuri: Tel. (39.6) 5459.2231
or Ms. Maria Teresa Rubin: Tel. (39.6) 5459.2394
CCD: - Mr. Gregoire de Kalbermatten
Room: C-369
Tel. (39.6) 5705.0358
or Ms. Sonia Filippazzi
Room: D-186
Tel. (39.6) 5705.3639
Fax: (39.6) 5705.3673

Background and purpose:
A growing number of migrants come from regions affected by drought and desertification. Cities are the main recipients of desertification-induced migrants. The financial and human cost to society of such massive displacements can be huge due to the social, political and economic tensions it causes. However, cities have the tools to assist in the search for an answer to these challenges.
For this reason the City of Rome, the CCD Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are organizing a Forum of Mayors on Cities and Desertification. The assembled mayors and local authorities from all continents will seek to promote the sustainable development of cities and their hinterlands in the light of problems created by desertification. They will analyze the problem, discuss some case studies, and set the basis for future initiatives of "jumelage" and decentralized cooperation, in the framework of the CCD's "bottom-up" approach. The Major of Rome will be invited to report on the forum to the COP.

B. NGO Forum

Date: Monday, 6 October
Venue: FAO, room to be announced
Participants: Accredited NGOs; open to all COP participants
Interpretation: Interpretation in all United Nations languages will be available
For information contact:
Ms. Sylvia Jampies
NGO Liaison
Room: C-226
Tel.(39.6) 5705.0385

Background and purpose:
The NGO Forum will be one day of workshops and open dialogue emphasizing the following themes: women, local experiences, communication and partnerships (this theme will be taken up during the plenary session on Thursday 8 October). It aims at the following general objectives:
• To enhance the idea of partnership between representatives from civil society and government representatives.
• To provide information and the exchange of thoughts, perceptions and ideas between communities/NGOs, governments and intergovernmental agencies.
• To inform decision-makers about the needs of local people.
• To highlight the on-going participatory mechanisms conducive to the facilitation of the implementation of the Convention.
• To present successful pilot projects related to the implementation of the Convention and local communities.
• To promote the integration of local knowledge in the NAP framework and processes in a way that re-inforces community value systems.
• To show the perception of desertification at grass-root level, the reality on-the-ground problems.
The NGO Forum is supported by the CCD Secretariat and IFAD.

C. Outreach Workshop and Press Seminar

Date: Monday, 6 October
Venue: FAO: Iran Conference Room
Participants: Open to all COP participants; participants are particularly encouraged to attend and participate in the outreach workshop in the morning.
For information contact:
Ms. Nada Osseiran
Media Liaison
Room: B-157
Tel. (39.6) 5705.0387
Fax: (39.6) 5705.0307

Background and purpose:
This forum is organized by the CCD Secretariat and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The first event is a morning workshop that will explore how to improve the way the international community communicates and publicizes the struggle against desertification, especially through the press. The workshop will include an examination of the outreach strategies used by successful campaigners on behalf of issues other than desertification. The second event is an afternoon press seminar featuring top international experts on the scientific and socio-economic aspects of desertification. This seminar will provide essential background on the issues underlying and shaping the political talks at the COP.

D. Comics to Combat Desertification

Date: Monday to Friday, 6-10 October
Venue: FAO, Polish Room
Participants: All COP participants are welcome
For information contact:
Ms. Sonia Filippazzi
Liaison Officer
Room: D-186
Tel. (39.6) 5705.3639
Fax: (39.6) 5705.3673

Background and purpose:
Cartoonists from all over the world have contributed over 70 drawings representing desertification from a different angle: humour. African, Asian, Latin American, European and North American artists have produced an interesting combination of drawings that show how desertification is perceived in different parts of the world, and how humour can turn a dramatic problem into a comic image. A catalogue is being produced and distributed together with a comic booklet with a story on desertification in the framework of the CCD search for more immediate and flexible tools of communication.

2. Exhibitions/ Presentations

Various exhibits and presentations will be taking place throughout the Conference. Exhibits will be displayed in different places, including the library and the internet café, and presentations will be held in different assigned rooms around the Conference Rooms. Further information will be provided by presenters, and presenters are invited to submit details for inclusion in the Daily Journal.